

## Final Recommendation

**Recommendation of the Action Plan Team:** CORE Mission

**State of Issue #14:** There is a need to enhance the collection of comprehensive data to support USFA and partner/customer analysis and policy decisions.

**Recommendation #:** R-64

Summary:

**R-64** “Use latest version of NFIRS, in conjunction with survey instruments (e.g. fire service census) to identify and maintain the demographics of organized fire departments in the United States.”

Recommendation:

This recommendation ties directly to USFA’s ability to fulfill its mission. As outlined below, the Fire Department Census being implemented by the National Fire Data Center (NFDC) should be fully supported as necessary and periodically updated.

Background:

There is a compelling need for a comprehensive database of America’s fire protection community. The USFA receives many requests for information related to fire departments, including but not limited to: total number of departments; staffing estimates; requests for mailing lists; number of stations per department; population protected; apparatus and equipment status; and racial/ethnic makeup of personnel. Although many data products and reports exist that contain fragmented or estimated information about fire department demographics, capabilities and activities, there is no single reference source today that aggregates these data to provide a complete and accurate profile of fire departments in the United States. In recognition of this situation, USFA is prepared to award a contract to address this issue directly.

1. Priority: High

Step(s) to Achieve:

1. Seek input from interested stakeholders pertaining to items of interest, scope and other parameters.
2. Engage services of a qualified contractor to develop an instrument and administer survey in accordance with established statistical methodology. This includes pilot study, OMB approval and analysis of final results.
3. Publish final report and findings as specified.

4. Avail database to interested parties for dissemination and use.

Estimated Time Frame: One year

Estimated Cost: Under Negotiation

Outcome: The NFDC seeks to identify all fire departments in the United States, regardless of department type, and to develop and populate a national database that will include information related to demographics, capabilities and activities. The database will be used by USFA to guide programmatic decisions, provide the fire service and the public with information about fire departments, free of charge, and to produce mailing lists for USFA publications and other materials.

Conclusion: The above steps will provide the USFA with a definitive resource of all known fire departments in the U.S., thus enabling the USFA to better meet its mission requirements.

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APPROVED/Date

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